

Castro's Fugitive Friend

Cuban President Fidel Castro doth protest too much. His complaint that a CIA tip-off led an NBC television crew to the house of the fugitive financier Robert Vesco is an outright lie. Well over a year ago, the Miami Herald reported that Vesco, who has been sought since 1972 primarily for embezzling \$224 million from the Geneva-based Investors Overseas Services Ltd., was living in luxury in Cuba. He has three houses there, one of them on the government-owned Hemingway Marina, as well as two private jets and at least six cars.

It is known that he smuggles valuable American technology whose sale to Cuba is prohibited under a U.S. embargo. That may be his principal worth to President Castro; but it is also suspected that he may be behind Cuban involvement in the drug trade and the contract murder of the minister of justice in

Colombia.

The Cuban dictator's description of Vesco as a family man being harassed by the press is quaint. How shocking that an NBC television crew should make a surprise visit to Vesco's home! Fidel Castro only granted Vesco residence in Cuba because the man is in need of medical treatment. "Is it right to harass a man like that?" asked the Cuban dictator. Why President Castro should sustain that a man facing six indictments — five in this country and one in Switzerland — should be protected not only from the law, but also from the press, may not be so difficult to fathom. It is suspected that Vesco is the kingpin in heroin trafficking and that his activities provide Fidel Castro with a useful side income to pay for Cuba's military adventures abroad, for subversion and for the training of terrorists.